

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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Doing Extraordinary Things

"Perfection consists not in doing extraordinary things, but in doing ordinary things with an extraordinary spirit." The author of this sentiment had the faculty of putting much in little. We may not follow the text, but it is a beautiful one, and contains the secret of a successful life. Human nature always wants to do something extraordinary. Ordinary duties, commonplace employments bore us. We are impatient of the obscure life. It takes more heroism and more character to meet the trifles of life, its little annoyances, its multitudinous small duties than it does to perform its more conspicuous actions. That is the extraordinary spirit that can triumph over the commonplace. Sam Jones said once that he would much rather be swallowed by a whale than nibbled to death by minnows. The essentric evangelist had often a wisdom of keen edge. The great multitude of men and women are nibbled to death by minnows. Think of the things a housewife has to do all day long and every day. It is frightful, and would be unbearable but for the heroic sense of duty, the inspiration of noble purpose, the sense of service for the loved ones which exalts the obscure duty and makes little things large in that ultimate sense of victory over the world, and over self; victory over impatience, discontent, repining, weariness, the kind of victory which eventuates in the strength of character, bringing with it the feeling that life is well worth living, not so much for what we achieve as for what we become.

After all it is the extraordinary spirit and not the extraordinary service that God is looking for. He doesn't need anything that we may do, but *we* need infinitely what we may be. We need to be strong, patient, pure, noble purposeful with a high purpose. Out of this world God is bringing up a population to inhabit a magnificent eternity. But the magnificence of that eternity doesn't consist in splendor of sky, and radiant world, and supernal city, so much as in the grandeur of its people. We think of heaven as a place of eternal glory. Let us think of it as a company of godlike personalities, spirits of just men made perfect, heroes of a thousand battles, crowned conquerors, not stilted, and self conscious, and exclusive like so many of the earthly great, but as perfect in spirit, in love, in

fellowship, in brotherliness, as they have, by God's grace, been magnificent in victory.

Dancing Out a Church Debt

This is the startling headline over an item recently printed in a secular paper, and followed by interesting details of the pious "reception and ball" which was executed in the public hall of the town. This appears to be the era of innovation in matters concerning the church, and it doesn't seem to be worth while to be shocked at anything we hear, else we would be always in a shocking condition. Among extraordinary innovations, however, the debt paying dance is certainly well to the front. Its pious purpose may be argued in extenuation, on the ground that the end justifies the means. It is an old argument, and used to be urged by the Roman Catholics in favor burning heretics. If the heretic recanted he was burned so as to make sure that he would never fall from grace any more, and if he refused to recant, he was burned so as to get the immediate benefit of purgatorial fires. The illustration is probably an extreme one, and out of harmony with this refined and tolerant age which excuses anything appearing in the church except religion. Let a man develop a plain case of unmistakable religion, and he becomes an object of suspicion at once, and the "regular order" and "accepted creed" and "old theology" fellows are apt to pitch him out of the synagogue without much ceremony. A debt paying dance! What an incongruity. Get into debt contrary to the scriptures, and the next thing is to get out contrary to the scriptures. We are a little curious to learn what music inspired the light fantastic toe on that occasion. It couldn't have been Old Hundred. My, that would have been a slow reel to turn a pious penny on. There would probably be some fitness in "How Firm a Foundation," for rythmic movements are known to have a straining effect on the sills and sleepers. We venture that it held on longer than the average church service, for it is well known that men and women tire much more quickly sitting perfectly and comfortably still in church than they do throughout the long hours of violent exercise incidental to the popular dance. No doubt that the opinion of Paul that bodily exercise is unprofitable was signally disproved by the receipts. When will people learn that there is but one way to pay church debts, and that is to *pay* them. Imagine the Apostle Paul inaugurating a Gentile hop to pay his traveling expenses.